

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 14222

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ECEM, EEW, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET CHEMICAL MINISTRY AND FOREIGN TRADE

REFS: (A) MOSCOW 13939, (B) MOSCOW 13657

1. WE PUT QUESTION RECENTLY TO FAIRLY SENIOR SOVIET GOSPLAN OFFICIAL WHETHER PRESSURE ON MINISTRY OF CHEMICAL INDUSTRY TO MEET DOMESTIC REQUIREMENTS MIGHT BE INTERFERING WITH SOVIET EXPORT POTENTIAL. OFFICIAL ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS COULD BE SO. HE DESCRIBED CHEMICAL MINISTER KOSTANDOV AS A DYNAMIC FIGURE WHO WAS A VIGOROUS POWER CENTER AND IN NEED OF SOMEONE LIKE GOSPLAN TO PUT A CLAMP ON HIS WRIST. IN HIS VIEW, KOSTANDOV IS ONE WHO IS HAPPY TO BUY FROM ABROAD BUT RELUCTANT TO SEE HIS MINISTRY PAY FOR THE IMPORTS WITH EXPORTS. SOURCE'S STATEMENT IMPLIED THAT THE "CLAMP" IS MISSING.

2. ANOTHER SOURCE, A BUSINESSMAN WHO KNOWS KOSTANDOV, DESCRIBED HIM TO US AS ONE OF THE LAST OF THE RUGGED INDIVIDUALISTS, A TWO-FISTED DRINKER, WHO USUALLY GETS HIS WAY.

3. AS WE TOOK PREMIER KOSYGIN THROUGH THE US PAVILION AT CHEMISTRY-77, KOSTANDOV WAS AT HIS SIDE AND GAVE
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THE IMPRESSION OF IN-DEPTH KNOWLEDGE OF HIS SUBJECT AND (AT LEAST APPARENTLY) SELF-CONFIDENCE IN HIS RELATIONSHIP TO KOSYGIN. INCIDENTLY, OUR GOSPLAN SOURCE ALSO STATED THAT KOSYGIN, THOUGH A FINE ECONOMIST, IS ALSO STRONGLY OF THE PERSUASION THAT SELLING SOVIET RESOURCES AT EXPORT IS TO SLANDER THE NATIONAL PATRIMONY.

MATLOCK

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Message Attributes

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